

From the Bangor Daily News, June 8:

FAVOR REPEAL OF PROHIBITORY LAW

Warm Debate Ensues in Labor Convention
When the Liquor Question
Arises

OFFICERS ELECTED TODAY

A red hot debate upon whether or not the Maine Federation of Labor should go upon record in regard to the repeal of the prohibitory law marked the conference Wednesday afternoon in City Hall. The discussion was spirited throughout. Opponents of the resolutions contended that it was not the province of labor to meddle in a question which was termed as delicate and proponents, chiefly represented by cigarmakers, maintained that the prohibitory law had worked havoc with their business.

The resolution, which was finally adopted by a yea and nay vote of 32 to 12, was as follows:

Whereas, There is to be voted on at the special election Sept. 11, 1911, the question of repealing the prohibition amendment to the Constitution, and

Whereas, This amendment, after many years, has proven unsatisfactory, therefore, be it

Resolved, That we favor the repeal of the prohibition amendment so that the way may be left open for the enactment under the referendum law of such laws that will remedy the unsatisfactory conditions that now exist.

(Signed)

James, A. O'Burke, Portland.

H. I. Mittenthal, Bangor.

H. A. Berube, Biddeford.

Wm. J. Healey, Rockland.

Roscoe A. Eddy of Bar Harbor, the remaining member of the committee on resolutions, did not sign the approval of the report.

After Chairman O'Rourke of the committee on resolutions had read this particular resolution, Thomas J. Lyons of Vinalhaven, formerly State Commissioner of Industrial and Labor Statistics, said that he failed to see what connection this matter had with the labor question. His reference to saloons brought an objection from a delegate.

"We can't decide for the people we represent," said Mr. Lyons, "The child labor may have failed but is that any reason why the law should be repealed? I am not a temperance crank but would rather live in a State where there are no licensed saloons than in one where there are."

First Vice President P. H. Fitzgerald of Augusta, in a forcible speech, declared: "I have never seen such a farce as there is in Maine. Politics is in it and has kept the law on our books. I don't care for politics. I am in favor of license. For 50 years we have waited for a chance to fight the law and now we have it."

"I don't want my name to go on record as voting for license," said David Walton of Lewiston, "My conscience won't allow me for I am for prohibition first, last and all the time."

"We are not voting on license," interjected Harry I. Mittenthal of Bangor.

"This question is important and delicate," said Henry M. Donnelly of Biddeford, the first State president, "We can't talk upon the question unless we talk license. I prefer a State with license to one without and I have been in both. This State is the limit as far as drunkenness is concerned. Even though we favor license I think we ought to be cautious and not go on record along these lines. I want license for it is preferable in the present rotten condition but I agree with Mr. Lyons."

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"I fear that you would consider me a coward if I did not say something in regard to my position," declared Roscoe A. Eddy of Bar Harbor, "I did not approve the resolution and will give my reasons. I won't discuss the prohibitory question. That will be taken care of at the September election. This is a labor convention. It is almost the first organization to hold a convention this spring. I saw a smile on the faces of the reporters when this matter was brought up. Tomorrow papers all over the country will tell about it. Ministers are speaking on this question, particularly Rev. H. E. Dunnack and this action is a slap in the face to him and others. It is wrong to put ourselves on record at this early time. I think the matter should be kept out in its entirety."

"Prohibition is detrimental to the cigarmakers," stated William Standcumbe of Boston, who represents the C. L. U. of Portland. "That should be considered. Because of the movement the Cigarmakers' Union has lost from 3,000 to 5,000 members. Under license law, our members prosper. We want you to take the prohibitory law, a miserable failure, out of the book as in other States. Illegal saloons ignore us; they won't buy union cigars."

"In Massachusetts, Rhode Island and other States, where there are legal saloons, union men are employed in every instance and union goods are sold. We say to them, 'if you want us to vote for license, you must patronize us.' There are only five saloons on the unfair list in Boston. The temperance people treat with the effect not the cause. You complain that we shouldn't be the first to take action. We have always been the first and always should be. Every cigarmaker in New England asks this of you. It means more industries and more population."

"Is there any reason why we should not go on record?" queried H. I. Mittenthal of Bangor. "Is the Maine Federation going to shirk? The more vital and the more delicate the question, the more it should be considered. York State, New Jersey, Massachusetts and others are not so bad as Maine when closed. Express companies object to the repeal of the law for it means the loss of thousands of dollars. If we do not adopt the resolutions, we are cowards."

"I am thinking of the effect of adopting this resolution," put in Mr. Lyons of Vinalhaven, "I saw a cigarmaker making up a poor cigar of odds and ends and he told me they were the barroom kind. Is that the kind you sell?"

"Those are made for kitchen barrooms," said Mr. Stancumbs. "The licensed kind sell the best. Most of these bad cigars come from Pennsylvania and New York. The State of Maine, one of the greatest in the country, is behind in everything; even labor unionism is dying."

(Adv.)